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Officership in the U.S. Army and the Royal Netherlands Army: A Comparison for Improvement

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ABSTRACT

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The Netherlands regards the United States as one of our best allies, and we have worked closely together in a variety of missions to include Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and in the Caribbean. The culture and organizational background of the U.S. Army has many similarities with the Royal Netherlands Army (RNLA). This common background and mutual respect provide the basis to compare leadership development of army officers in these countries. This paper first examines how the concept of officership was developed in the U.S. Army from Vietnam through the Gulf War to today. It then describes how the RNLA developed the concept of officership from the Cold War to Srebrenica and beyond. It then briefly compares officership in both countries in the following four areas: how it differs with leadership in the civilian society; how it is institutionalized in both armies; the skills, competencies and qualities of officership; and how all of this works. The paper recommends that the RNLA can improve its officership by limiting the importance of management, increasing the focus on values to establish and support a war-fighting ethos, and effectively anchoring new officership within the organization.

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OFFICERSHIP IN THE U.S. ARMY AND THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS ARMY; A COMPARISON FOR IMPROVEMENT

I tell you, as officers, that you will not eat, sleep, smoke, sit down and lie down until your soldiers have had a chance to do these things. If you will hold to this, they will follow you to the end of earth. If you do not, I will break you in front of your regiment.

—Field Marshal Slim, 1944.

In 1995 Srebrenica fell. This small Muslim city in Bosnia, and the surrounding area declared a “safe haven” by the UN and guarded by Dutch peacekeepers, was occupied by Serbian troops. In one of recent history’s biggest massacres, more than seven thousand Muslims were killed, some of them never to be found again. After years of investigation and thorough examination, the common opinion emerged that the UN and the Dutch Government were primarily responsible for the Srebrenica disaster, taking away this responsibility from the Dutch battalion. But the overall Dutch behavior at Srebrenica serves as a catalyst to take a closer look into officership taught and developed in the Royal Netherlands Army (RNLA). Although the army witnessed an intense transformation during the last decade, in which it changed into a professional, all volunteer army and was deployed in an impressive amount of peace operations, few considered the effects of this drastic evolution on the leadership of the officers of all ranks. The performance of Dutch officers at Srebrenica shows that the RNLA might need a transformation of its officership. This research will make a contribution to the leadership transformation effort, assuming that this paper’s results will be used by the RNLA to define the desired officership and develop actions to reach this desired end state.

To understand the path an army must take to transform, we must first examine the past. Therefore, officership transformation can only be sufficiently understood if we take a look into recent historical developments regarding this topic. By expanding this research to other armies and comparing the developments, a solid foundation will be created for describing the current status of officership and the formulation of options to improve.

It makes sense to base this research on Dutch officer transformation by examining the developments regarding officership in the U.S. Army and comparing them with the situation in the RNLA. First, the Netherlands regards the United States as one of its best allies. Second, although the United States is unique in being a superpower, the cultural and organizational background of the U.S. Army has many similarities with the RNLA. Third, the U.S. Army witnessed a serious downfall of its officership during and after the Vietnam War. The manner in

which the US Army resolved this problem can be of great value for the RNLA, which more or less finds itself in a similar situation today as the U.S. Army found itself thirty years ago. Consequently, the first sections of this paper will describe the recent developments of officership in both the U.S. Army and the RNLA, using the Vietnam era as the starting point. The following section will compare and contrast the findings about officership described in the first section and draw conclusions. Based on these conclusions, this paper will identify specific recommendations and actions to improve effective officership in the RNLA.

Before beginning this examination, it is important to define what "officership" means. In the U.S. Army leadership by officers is often referred to as "Army Officership." It is defined as *"the professional practice of being a commissioned Army leader. An essential part of officership is a shared professional identity or self-concept, shaped by what an officer must **KNOW** and **DO**, but most important, inspired by a deeply held personal understanding and internalization of what an officer must **BE**. This self-identity inspires and shapes the officer's behavior on and off-duty, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."*¹ Commissioned officership involves a particular kind of leadership. It differs from other forms of Army leadership by the quality and kinds of expert knowledge it requires, the breadth of its responsibilities, and the magnitude of the consequences of inaction or ineffectiveness.²

SECTION ONE: OFFICERSHIP IN THE U.S. ARMY

A man can be selfish, cowardly, disloyal, false, fleeting, perjured, and morally corrupt in a wide variety of other ways and still be outstandingly good in pursuits in which other imperatives bear than those upon the fighting man. He can be a superb creative artist, for example, or a scientist in the very top flight and still be a very bad man. What the bad man cannot do is be a good sailor, or soldier, or airman. Military institutions thus form a repository of moral resource, which should always be a source of strength within the state.

—General Sir John Hackett, 1976.

FROM VIETNAM TO THE GULF WAR

Before its deployment to Vietnam, the U.S. Army was confident that its leaders had the necessary qualities to assure military success.³ Based on success in World War II and Korea, the Army had great trust in its leadership. Although shortcomings were sometimes noticed, there were few who saw an urgent need to make major changes in the way officers were educated and trained, or thought, worked, and acted.⁴

During the Vietnam War, doubts started to arise. One of the first officials who questioned officership was General William McCaffrey, at that time a Commanding Officer in Vietnam. In 1969 he reported that: "discipline within the command as a whole has eroded and that within the chain of command communication has broken down."⁶ Nevertheless, until 1970, no in-depth studies of moral or value systems were undertaken by the U.S. Army despite the continuing disintegration.⁶

In April 1970, General Westmoreland ordered the Army War College to conduct an empirical study into the state of professionalism and leadership in the officer corps.⁷ He directed the study to especially focus on the state of discipline, integrity, morality, and ethics.⁸ The results were a shock. The study noted a significant divergence within the officer corps from "the idealized climate" of military professionalism (characterized by: individual integrity, mutual trust and confidence, unselfish motivation, technical competence, and an unconstrained flow of information) to an "existing climate", characterized by the "ambitious, transitory commander – marginally skilled in the complexities of his duties – engulfed in producing statistical results, fearful of personal failure, too busy to talk with or listen to his subordinates, and determined to submit acceptably optimistic reports which reflect faultless completion of a variety of tasks at the expense of the sweat and frustration of his subordinates."⁹ When General Westmoreland read the study he proclaimed it "a masterpiece" and restricted its distribution to generals only. As a group they had quite substantial reservations about its conclusions.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Army began to realize that it had to take a broad look into overall leadership and officership in particular. In 1971 the U.S. Army Continental Army Command Leadership Board stated that "In our various personnel and organizational studies, we have been too concerned with management, money and machines, and not concerned enough with motivating men to perform with full effectiveness."¹¹

After the Vietnam War, the discontent concerning officership displayed in Indo-China was fuelled by extensive research by people in and out of the Army. This research identified a crisis in leadership and especially officership in Vietnam. One of the most important books was titled "Crisis in Command" and written by Gabriel and Savage. Their thesis was that "it was not the antiwar sentiment at home that destroyed the Army's effectiveness; it was the Army Brass itself."¹² The writers argued that even before the final debacle in Vietnam, there were strong indications that the officer corps was more concerned with furthering their individual careers than with developing cohesion. Consequently, they stated that: "Honor, integrity, and personal responsibility had been abandoned to selfish ends."¹³ The most important reason for this moral decline was the managerial ethos. By using common civilian management policies and

techniques, the Army “turned into a bureaucracy where people were focused on technique, not goals; on self-advancement, not group loyalty; on the career, not tradition and on their own futures, not policy.”¹⁴

These findings were supported by other researchers. Loren Baritz stated that “the moral decay and increasing incompetence of the Army’s senior officers in Vietnam was minimally caused by personal failures of individuals... the corruption in Vietnam was systemic and was caused by procedures within the Army that had been borrowed from other American bureaucratic institutions, primarily industry.”¹⁵ Even senior Army officers underlined the decline of officership. As General Bruce Palmer wrote: “From 1969 until the last U.S. combat troops left in August 1972, a decline in performance set in; the discovery of widespread drug use in Vietnam in the spring of 1970 signaled that more morale and disciplinary troubles lay ahead. The so called “fraggings” of leaders that began in 1960-70 were literally murderous indicators of poor morale and became a matter of deep concern.”¹⁶

The “management ethos” that was adopted by the Army resulted in specific shortsighted personnel management policies that had a direct impact on the quality of officership. Commonly seen as representing these management policies was: the system of officer rotation (establishing the one year tour of duty with a six-month rotation between staff and command positions); the inexperience of officers in military operations (highly linked with the first policy); and the individual personnel system, which produced constant turnovers in all ranks.

The result of these studies was that the Army became convinced that it had to change. Starting in the seventies, it began to make major changes in all the elements that make an army successful. Training and doctrine became institutionalized in the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), where a new doctrine called Air-Land Battle was developed and revised training policies to support this doctrine were instituted.¹⁷ On the political and strategic level the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 increased the role and power of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in providing advice to the President, and made the Combatant Commanders, not the Service Chiefs, responsible for developing and executing military operations.¹⁸ And finally, the Army began a fundamental change in its programs to develop officership.

In defining the direction of change the U.S. Army thoroughly studied the civilian literature, primarily aimed “at the formulation of common values and competencies, whose characteristics transcend all ages and were more or less applicable in civil management.”^{19 20} The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Meyer, adopted these views. He declared: “We need to discuss openly the fact that we have been lavish in our rewards to those who have

demonstrated excellence in sophisticated business and management techniques. These talents are worthwhile to a leader, but, of themselves, they are not leadership.....today, we need sensitivity and backbone beyond that which the past several decades have demanded.²¹ He also linked the failure of leadership in Vietnam with the need to integrate essential values in leadership: “In the process of that war, have we eroded essential values?”²²

The recognition that management and leadership are equally important, but not substitutes for one another, and the increasing demand for enduring values found its way into several Army publications, including field manuals. Several editions of FM 22-100 (Army Leadership) stressed the growing importance of what a leader should BE (besides KNOW and DO). This trend of emphasizing values also found its way into officer education. The U.S. Military Academy at West Point revived its Code of Honor, stating that “A Cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, nor tolerate those who do.”²³ Another aspect of the “New Look” in leadership was finally brought forward by FM 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels*. This manual recognized that different leadership is required for different organizational levels. FM 22-103 underlined the complexity of leadership and command at senior levels and the separate need to address indirect leadership concepts and fundamentals critical to building organizational teams.²⁴

This decade of change after the Vietnam War ended with the formulation of an integrated view of how to grow leaders. DA Pamphlet 600-32, *Leader Development*, defined the doctrinal foundation of leader development as three pillars that “progressively and sequentially lay out “where” it happens: *institutional training*, *operational assignments* and *self-development*.²⁵ A remarkable change occurred as the emphasis focused on operational assignments, which clearly ended the tendency to make a career through staff-assignments.

When the Cold War ended almost two decades later, the Army had witnessed a cultural change of its officership. A renewed emphasis on values, the decreasing importance of civilian management techniques, differentiation in leadership levels and organizational leader development changed the conduct and performance of Army officers.

The success of the Army leadership in executing the buildup and execution of the Gulf War raised a general feeling that the U.S. Army managed to turn the corner concerning officership. Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm showed that the Army had achieved an effective chain of command, good leadership, and operational success.²⁶

AFTER THE GULF WAR

In the years after the Gulf War the Army became more deeply involved in peace-keeping and humanitarian operations. Technological adaptation took place amid large force reductions and declining resources. This culminated in an increasing pace of activity with high demands on the soldiers. Over the years, this situation had negative effects on officership. A survey sponsored by the Army Command and General Staff College in 1995 found some concerns about leadership and the command climate strikingly similar to those reported in the 1970 Army War College Study.²⁷ In August 1997, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff acknowledged that there were “cracks” in unit readiness.²⁸ In the same year a survey of several thousand soldiers reported that less than half the respondents replied positively to questions of confidence in their leaders.²⁹ This trend was also observed by civilian writers like John Kotter. He explained that the experience in the mid-1990s was similar to civilian companies, where most developed a change-resistant culture because management grew more arrogant about its own “wonderfulness.”³⁰

A 1999 revised edition of FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, tried to cope with the issues mentioned above. Unlike the previous editions, this manual covered three levels of leadership: direct, organizational, and strategic. This was based on the recognition that leaders on the higher levels needed additional tools: “the skills and competencies needed at the direct level also apply for the other levels, but the other levels demand (above that) more competencies and skills.”³¹ Besides introducing these three levels of leadership, the manual tried to address the emerging problems concerning leadership by stressing the special role of leadership in the Army, the officer's moral and ethical responsibilities, and the need to take and accept risks and promote moral courage.³² A good example of this trend is the following quote: “The Army is an institution, not an occupation. Members take an oath of service to the nation and the Army, rather than simply accept a job... The Army has moral and ethical obligations to those who serve and their families; they, correspondingly, have responsibilities to the Army...”³³ However, the distinction in levels of leadership and the renewed emphasis on values did not fully solve the problem of the existing lack of confidence in leadership. There are no indications that specific measures were developed and implemented to assure a change of attitude of the leaders themselves.

After General Shinseki became Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) in 1999, he started the Army's Transformation, which impacted all elements of military power: doctrine, organization, material, and personnel. The CSA regarded the last being the most important. “Ultimately, the success of Army Transformation will depend on our people. They remain the centerpiece of our

formations, as they have for 227 years.³⁴ Being confronted with the need to eliminate the emerging shortcomings in leadership and to ensure a successful transformation, the CSA started with in-depth research of the existing state of leadership. In June 2000, the CSA chartered the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) to look specifically at training and leader development as part of the Army's Transformation Campaign Plan.³⁵ The Panel interviewed more than 13,500 Army leaders and their spouses. These interviews revealed that Army practices were out of balance with Army beliefs. This was based on the following: the Army faced an undisciplined operational pace; the Army expected more commitment from officers and their families than it provided; micromanagement was pervasive; the Army used an insufficient Officer Education System (OES), Officer Efficiency Report (OER) and an outdated leader development model; and there was diminishing direct contact between seniors and subordinates.³⁶ The Panel analyzed these results and formulated specific recommendations for the CSA. The most important recommendations were focused on operational pace, reviewing the OER and OES, formulating doctrine for mentoring, encouraging life-long learning and developing a Training and Leader Development Model.³⁷

Another perspective of examining leadership from a generational viewpoint was presented by Dr. Leonard Wong. By comparing the characteristics of the current generation of leadership with the future generation, he came to a similar set of recommendations to reduce the operational pace by prioritizing training, increase coaching and mentoring of future leaders, and stop micromanagement.³⁸ But he also went an important step further than the ATLDP by advocating a change in the Army culture when he stated: "Our captains are leaving and that says something about who they are and what the Army has become. It is time we took notice and did something about it."³⁹

Finally, the ATLDP views were reinforced by a study conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). This study, named *American Military Culture in the 21st Century*, underlined the shortcomings of the current evaluation system and described the lack of an effective leader development system.⁴⁰

The CSA used the information gathered above for specific actions. He developed a framework for the Army Mentorship Program,⁴¹ is studying possible changes in the current OER and designated West Point as the Army's "Center for the Study of Officership."⁴² But most of all, he defined three leader development strategies to harness its leaders' potential.⁴³ At the core of these strategies is the emphasis on the four interrelated roles of an officer: war fighter, servant to the nation, member of the Army profession and leader of character. To fulfill this last role, the future officer needs to possess a well developed sense of ethics, leadership, team skills,

versatility, communication skills, and dedication to lifelong learning.⁴⁴ Besides that, “he must have the flexibility to adapt to a constantly changing environment, accept nontraditional roles, must know how to use modern technology and be skilled in a constant self-assessment.”⁴⁵

Finally, he ordered an overall evaluation of the OES, seen as fundamental to develop officership. The current OES was aimed at preparing officers for the conduct of war. It accomplished this purpose by teaching officers how to employ combat forces at three levels of warfare; tactical, operational, and strategic. Each of these levels was associated with specific schooling.⁴⁶ Following commission and initial branch schools (the tactical level), the next opportunity for formal education for most officers occurred at the Command and General Staff College (operational level). Finally, warfare at the strategic level was taught at the senior service schools, such as the U.S. Army War College or other Service equivalent. Inherent in this structure were two implicit assumptions. First, officers would not serve in positions calling for them to make decisions or provide advice at a level exceeding their schooling. Second, the training and experience officers received at each level provided an adequate basis for advancement to the next level.⁴⁷ The new security environment may change these assumptions. Based on the ongoing integration of the three levels of warfare, the officer today is much more likely to make decisions, even within the tactical environment, which could have operational and strategic consequences. This, in combination with technological developments as the use of the Internet, which expands both learning opportunities and information flow, creates the momentum for a renewed OES.

Although the CSA developed and implemented all the actions above to improve officership, no specific initiatives were taken to change the Army culture regarding the attitude of the officers towards subordinates. It is questionable whether the reduced confidence in leadership and the lack of contact between seniors and subordinates can be restored by the measures mentioned above.

SUMMARY

In summary, officership in the Army since Vietnam paints a picture of constant evolution. The Army's fundamental view of officership after Vietnam was: based on values more than on competencies; stressed leadership with additional use of management techniques; integrated the welfare of families in Army policies; differentiated the leadership levels into the tactical, operational and strategic levels; and institutionalized leader development within these levels. The educational system to support this view of officership was structured along the three levels of warfare and stressed values such as honor and integrity. For the future, effective

officership is regarded as one of the cornerstones of a successful transformation. Values and leadership will remain essential parts of officership, reinforced with emphasises on the use of technology, lifelong learning, adaptability and self-assessment. What remains is the question whether these initiatives will be sufficient to resolve the existing problems regarding the lack of confidence by junior officers in their senior leaders.

SECTION TWO: OFFICERSHIP IN THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS ARMY (RNLA)

De acties rond de enclave Srebrenica waren niet alleen de “oorlog” van de generaals, maar ook die van de sergeanten, luitenanten en kapiteins.

(the actions around the enclave of Srebrenica were not only the “war” of the generals, but also the war of the sergeants, lieutenants and captains).

—Retired Chief of staff of the RNLA, LGEN Huyser, 1996.

FROM INDONESIA TO THE COLD WAR

After World War II, the RNLA was deployed in two major operations. It experienced combat during the war of independence in Indonesia (the former Dutch East Indies) and participated with a battalion-size detachment in the Korean War. During the Cold War the RNLA was almost completely focused on its primary role within NATO. As part of the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG), the 1(NL)Corps was to contribute to the NATO forward defense strategy by conducting defensive operations in the northern part of Germany. Based on its limited resources, the RNLA mainly consisted of conscript forces. These conscripts provided not only the bulk of the enlisted men, but most of the officers at the platoon level as well. This system of force-development placed high demands on the training system. Due to the limited time available for training, the lack of experience in combat operations, and the need to teach necessary basic skills, the training system was primarily based on teaching competencies. Little time was allocated for teaching other aspects of leadership, such as values and ethics.⁴⁸

In 1957, the Army defined leadership as *“the ability to influence personnel and to lead them towards a particular goal in such a way as to bring about trust, respect, genuine cooperation and obedience”*.⁴⁹ The possible deployment of nuclear weapons forced the Army to conduct a highly centralized battle, with only limited operational freedom for lower organizational levels. The definition of leadership seemed in line with these mission restrictions and focused on the technical aspects of leadership, while little attention was paid to the mental and ethical

aspects of leadership. Besides that, no clear distinction was made between leadership by enlisted soldiers and leadership by officers.

During the 1960s and the 1970s, the RNLA faced the implications of democratization in Dutch society. The demand for more democracy in the armed forces resulted in three major developments: the emergence of unions for conscripts and professional soldiers; less restrictions on soldiers regarding their personnel appearance (the most famous example of this were “the long-haired soldiers”); and limitations in the use and effects of military law.⁵⁰ These developments placed additional demands on the officers in the RNLA. A first effort to formulate policies to deal with these challenges was made in 1977 with the appearance of the “Concept on Leadership in the RNLA” (Beleidsconcept leidinggeven in de KL). The main focus of this policy was to implement a style of leadership not only based on rank, but also on participation, democratic values, and human interest.⁵¹ One of the effects of this policy was a renewed discussion about the education of professional officers at the Royal Military Academy. In 1980, the Minister of Defense announced a review of the ends, ways, and means of this education, which resulted in refocusing the educational goals of the Royal Military Academy towards increased academics.⁵² The main focus was now on military science, defined as “learning the necessary skills and competencies to influence the behavior of people.”⁵³ This caused an increased interest in military management that was especially focused on what a leader must KNOW and DO, and less on what a leader must BE.

THE END OF THE COLD WAR

As the Cold War was ending in 1990, the RNLA Chief of Staff (Bevelhebber der Landstrijdkrachten, (BLS)) foresaw that this event would eventually have a major impact on the Army. One of the measures he took was to declare the year 1990 as “the year of leadership.” The BLS appointed a committee with the mission of formulating a renewed military leadership policy. This committee finished work in April 1991 with the presentation of “The Policy on Leadership in the RNLA.”⁵⁴ It defined military leadership as: *“influencing the behavior of people in order to accomplish a given task with the allocated resources in the most effective way.”*⁵⁵ In comparison with the 1957 definition, we see a reinforced emphasis on the technical aspects of leadership and an almost complete disregard of the mental and ethical elements of leadership. However, this conclusion was not in complete agreement with the overall content of the policy paper, where the committee defined ethics and leader development as crucial for effective leadership. This discrepancy between the content of the paper and the definition of leadership eventually led to a deadlock concerning the development of ethics as a part of leadership in the

RNLA. While a few initiatives were proposed to infuse ethics in leader development , not a single one was put into effect.

Although the 1991 definition of leadership had a strong technical character and therefore seems to have many similarities to civilian leadership, the committee nevertheless formulated five differences between civilian leadership and leadership in the RNLA. These differences were summarized as:

- Leadership in the army can involve life-threatening situations.
- Leadership in the army is conducted in frequently changing circumstances.
- The Army mainly consists of conscripts, civilian organizations work with professionals.
- The Army has its own legal system.
- The Army places a high burden on a soldier's home front.⁵⁶

The policy paper defined the leader as a “commander, manager, leader and professional.”⁵⁷ By stating these roles, the policy declared that management and leadership contributed to each other. The manager organizes and allocates his assets in order to assure that the mission can be accomplished at the right place in the given time. If the manager needs to influence people to reach these objectives, the leader steps forward.⁵⁸

In addition to this policy, the RNLA Training Command (Commando Opleidingen Koninklijke Landmacht (COKL)), developed the individual education policy in the RNLA. This policy defined five basic competencies required for a successful military leader, which were summarized as: the ability to prepare, conduct, and evaluate actions, combined with communicative and social competencies.⁵⁹

Analyzing the events in the early 1990s paints a picture about leadership that can be characterized by an enduring emphasis on management that is mainly focused on the technical aspects of leadership. It was primarily aimed at learning skills and competencies (KNOW and DO) and less aimed at what a leader must BE.

SREBENICA AND BEYOND

After the end of the Cold War the RNLA was suddenly faced with an increasing deployment in peace-operations. Until 1990, the Army had been involved in some minor humanitarian operations (in France, Germany and Italy), took part in UNTSO (Golan Heights), the MFO (Sinai), and the peace-keeping operation in Lebanon (UNIFIL). After 1990, parts of the army were deployed in Northern Iraq (Provide Comfort I), former Yugoslavia (e.g. UNPROFOR, IFOR and SFOR), Kosovo (KFOR), Macedonia, Cyprus (UNFICYP), Angola, Namibia (UNTAG), Zaire/Rwanda, Uganda (UNOMUR), Ethiopia (UNMEE), Cambodia (UNTAC), Iraq (UNSCOM),

and Haiti (IPM). In addition to this increased operational tempo, a major change in the RNLA occurred in 1993 when the Dutch Government decided to change the armed forces from conscript-based forces into an all-professional force.

The increased scope and character of the deployments along with the all-professional force had a major influence on leadership.⁶⁰ First, the Army and its leaders were suddenly confronted with combat or combat-like situations. The stress caused by this was new to most of them. Second, the new professional soldiers created much higher demands on leadership than commonly seen in the former conscript army. Leaders were suddenly confronted by their subordinates and peers with an increased need to know their business, set the example, and mentor those they lead. Third, the Army found itself as an organization enduring constant change. After 1990, the Army was subject to greater resource reductions and more frequent reorganizations. However, these circumstances did not lead to a different policy regarding leadership. Although not proven, one could suggest that the RNLA was completely occupied trying to do the job right, while no one was questioning whether the army did the right job.

In the 1990s there were major negative experiences with the Army's leadership that finally led to the recognition that change was necessary in the leader development policy. During the employment of some small communication units in Bosnia in 1992, the RNLA for the first time received reports about a lack of good leadership.⁶¹ It was revealed that some NCOs were not able to function under stress, which sometimes lead to inadequate operational performance. This information was reinforced by reports from Angola, where some Dutch officers were accused of having sexual relationships with locals.⁶² Finally, the tragic events in Bosnia in 1995 convinced the RNLA that it had to change its views about leadership. When the UN declared the town of Srebrenica and its surroundings as a "safe haven", this area was guarded by a RNLA airmobile battalion. In July 1995 the Serbs invaded the enclave and killed approximately 7000 Muslims, most of them captured combatants. Although the battalion as a whole was found innocent of wrongdoing, many doubts arose about the leadership at the battalion level. The official research conducted on behalf of the Dutch Government by an independent institution, stated that "whether the leadership at the battalion level was in line with the professional demands on military leadership on this level, depends one's personnel expectations. However, in retrospect serious questions must arise about the quality of this leadership."⁶³

Based on the terrifying experiences and public uproar after the fall of the Srebrenica enclave, the RNLA slowly started to change its policy about leadership. Since 1996 these changes centered around six major areas. Each of these areas, which fundamentally changed

the focus, scope, education, and character of current and future Dutch leaders will now be discussed in more detail.

First, the RNLA started to make distinctions between leadership by enlisted soldiers and leadership by officers. Leadership by officers (now for the first time called “officership”) was characterized by “the making of choices and the formulation of priorities. These are made based on an analysis of a variety of complex factors. The officer is responsible for the planning, conducting and evaluation of operations.”⁶⁴ The officer therefore has to be “a captain, planner, leader and adviser.”⁶⁵ However, it is the NCO who translates the orders into action. To act successfully, the NCO needs to be “a leader, a professional and an instructor.”⁶⁶

Second, in 1998 the BLS developed a renewed policy paper concerning leadership, titled “Vision on Leadership”. This document confirms the division between leadership by enlisted soldiers and officership⁶⁷ and defines leadership in general as “*influencing the behavior of others, combined with the total devotion of the leader himself, in order to achieve the formulated goals together.*”⁶⁸ Compared with the definition as formulated in 1991 (“*influencing the behavior of people in order to accomplish a given task with the allocated resources in the most effective way*”), the Army moved away from the “managerial view”. This move is reflected by the absence of the management words “resources” and “effective” and the inclusion of the words “together” and “devotion”. While the 1991 document talked about ethics, but did not implement this in its policies, the 1998 document completely ignored the subject of ethics. The absence of ethics contradicts the trend stated earlier and reduces the document’s credibility.

Third, major changes occurred in the education of officers. Until the change into a professional Army in 1993, conscript officers were educated at the branch schools, such as the infantry school. Professional officers, based on their previous civilian level of education, were placed either at the Royal Military Academy or at the Officers school, both located in Breda. As a result of the change into an all-professional Army in 1993, the schools for conscript officers were abandoned and all officers were educated at both institutions in Breda. As a result of the new leader development policies in 1998, all officers received their education at the Royal Military Academy. This applied for both regular officers and the new short-term officers, who would be commissioned for a maximum period of five years of service. The profile of the future officer was newly defined as: “*Officers lead people to be able to use force in peacetime, crisis and war. They give guidance and participate militarily in processes where the allocation of personnel, material and financial assets must lead to the desired end state.*...”⁶⁹ While this profile is broadly in line with the common views of leadership mentioned earlier, what is new is that the education of the regular officers would be fully synchronized with the civilian education

system. Until 1998 a cadet would only receive a limited amount of academic training, which was not sufficient for a baccalaureate. In 1998 the Academy started to change its curriculum so that “career officers were given the opportunity to acquire an academic degree also valid in civilian life. It was thought, too, that such a degree would raise their educational qualifications and also improve the image of the officer profession...”⁷⁰

Fourth, the Army began to reflect on the nature of officership itself. In July 2002 the BLS decided to install a panel to evaluate the values that existed within the officer corps. Based on the negative experiences in Srebrenica, tendencies to put personnel interest above the organizational interests, and a possible overemphasis on managerial skills, the BLS ordered the panel to evaluate the current values and (if necessary) to identify needed additional values. The purpose was to form a solid base for a new kind of officership which could easily be projected on the political and civil society.⁷¹

Fifth, the RNLA was confronted with a new generation of young officers who gained a broad range of experiences during peace-operations. These officers were confronted with colleagues and leaders at higher organizational levels without these same experiences. Due to this experience gap, a kind of “bottom-up” approach appeared, where the lessons learned by these young officers were taken through the chain of command and started to find their way into formal policies. This “bottom-up” approach is promoted by the Dutch culture where the formalities between ranks are not as pronounced as in many other cultures, and young officers are given as much freedom, independence and responsibility as possible.⁷²

Finally, the BLS ordered a revision of the defined careers of officers. Instead of a lifetime commitment, the RNLA started to change to a “up or out” system, very similar to the system currently in use by the U.S. Army. By doing this, the BLS wants to renew the officer corps and change some aspects of the current culture such as risk-avoidance, conservatism and bureaucracy.⁷³

There has been a positive impact of these six changes on officership in the RNLA. Not only is the rate of retention going down,⁷⁴ reports from outside sources state that the overall performance of Dutch officers is satisfying. An illustration of this is brought forward by General Hillier, former Commander of the Multinational Division South West in Bosnia (SFOR). After his return from Bosnia, he ordered his staff to investigate the reasons for the very successful performance of Dutch officers. He specifically ordered his staff to focus on the young platoon commanders, who he evaluated as “extremely skillful, highly independent and very effective.”⁷⁵

Besides these fundamental changes, other aspects remained unchanged. To begin with, the overall system of officer education is still based on existing levels of military operations. Basic training was aimed at the technical level (platoon), and the second level of education aimed at the tactical level (company and battalion). Education at the operational level was taught at the designated Army-school in Rijswijk (an equivalent of the CGSC and SAMS, both at Leavenworth), while the political-strategic level was educated in a joint academy, also located in Rijswijk. Until now, no specific actions were developed to revise this system as a result of the increasing links between the levels of military operations.⁷⁶ Furthermore, a military career in the RNLA is not specifically linked with command experience. Based on specific skills such as designated academic education at civilian institutions or as a result of good performance in staff-functions, it is still possible to obtain high positions in the RNLA.⁷⁷ Finally, the manager ethos is still widespread within the RNLA. The culture of managing instead of leading has had a negative impact on the army, especially during operational circumstances. This culture has yet to be changed.⁷⁸

SUMMARY

In summary, the overall picture of officership in the RNLA is characterized by an enduring emphasis on management, combined with elements of specific military leadership. There were only minor differences between officership in the army and management in the civil society. As long the RNLA found itself in a stable environment such as the Cold War, this kind of officership was sufficient. Serious problems started to arise when the RNLA was deployed in peace-operations. As operations became dominated by a high degree of violence, instability, and friction, officership became insufficient for successful operations.

SECTION THREE: COMPARISON

The elements of leadership are constant... but changed conditions may require a different technique.

—Field Marshall Earl Wavell

In this section a comparison will be made between officership in the U.S. Army and the RNLA. This comparison is based on four criteria, whose origins are found in the contents of the previous chapters. The first criterion compares officership with leadership in civil society. The second criterion aims at the organizational level. It describes the way officership is formally

institutionalized in both armies. It will especially focus on formulated policy and the way this policy is implemented. The third criterion concentrates on the primary contents of officership, paying attention to the skills, competencies, and qualities seen necessary for officers. The fourth criterion will focus on the way all these components work in reality.

OFFICERSHIP AND CIVILIAN SOCIETY

I could not “manage” my platoon up a hill. I had to lead them up there.

—James R. McDonough

This first criterion describes if, (and to what extent), the Army regards its officership different from leadership in civil society. Based on the information gathered above, the U.S. Army's position on this has significantly changed over the last few decades. “*Good management is good leadership*”, was a famous phrase used by General Westmoreland during his command. After analyzing the Vietnam War, the U.S. Army moved away from this point of view and began to regard management as a part of leadership. Management was seen as a valuable tool for internal efficiency within the U.S. Army, but also as a technique which could not replace leadership in an operational environment. This attitude is still in place in the U.S. Army today.

The RNLA is trying to find its way regarding this topic. During the Cold War the RNLA was heavily focused on management. The pace of mission and operational change which happened after the Cold War, and when combined with some negative experiences during peace-operations, led to the first signs of change where management lost some of its preeminence. However, it is still unclear whether these developments will finally culminate in a different overall attitude regarding officership.

The conclusion is that there remains a significant difference between the U.S. Army and the RNLA regarding this criterion. Where the U.S. Army sees management as a valuable part of leadership, the RNLA commonly sees management as leadership.

OFFICERSHIP AND THE ORGANIZATION

The development of bold, innovative leaders of character and competence is fundamental to the long-term health of the Army. We must grow leaders, NCOs, officers, and civilians for the future by providing appropriate opportunities for the development of those skilled in the profession of war fighting.

—General Eric. K. Shinseki.

This criterion concentrates on the way officership is formally anchored in the army. It takes into account whether policy on officership is formulated, how it is implemented, and how effective this implementation has been.

During the past two decades, officership has evolved into a major characteristic of the U.S. Army. Not only is officership formally institutionalized through policy papers and Field Manuals, it has also settled “in the hearts and minds” of the soldiers. Specific character issues such as values and ethics are widespread within the Army and can be regarded as common knowledge. Within officership a distinction is made between the three levels of operations, resulting in different demands on officership at the strategic level vice operational vice tactical. Besides these current issues, by integrating leadership in Army Transformation and institutionalizing officership at the USMA, the U.S. Army seems to have set the conditions for a solid future continuation of officership.

The situation in the RNLA is different. First, although policy on leadership was frequently formulated at the highest organizational level, there was a lack of implementation. Second, it was not until recently that officership was formulated as a specific kind of leadership. In the decades before, no real distinction was made between common leadership and officership, nor had any distinction been made about different characteristics needed in officership at the different organizational levels. Third, officership in the RNLA is not anchored in the organization. Although the Royal Military Academy has a lot of knowledge and opinions about officership, it only recently became the organizational center for officership.

In contrast to the RNLA, officership is broadly interwoven within the U.S. Army. In the RNLA officership is the subject of study, policy and discussion, but is not integrated into Army policy and products.

THE CONTENTS OF OFFICERSHIP

Leadership is simply finding your way to the hearts of men.

—Eisenhower.

This criterion focuses on the skills, competencies and qualities which an officer should have. Both armies have clear views about this topic. The U.S. Army has several Field Manuals covering this topic, with FM 22-100 currently being preeminent. This Field Manual describes what a leader should BE, KNOW and DO. It emphasizes character as a main leader characteristic, leading towards specific values and attributes. This theme is further explained and deepened by

the use of historical examples, such as the conduct of COL Chamberlain at Gettysburg or GEN Washington at Newburgh. This focus on the mental side of leadership is also represented in other documentation as it is seen as inherent to leadership.

In the RNLA the focus is different. As mentioned in Section Two, five competencies were defined for leaders: the ability to prepare, conduct and evaluate actions, combined with communicative and social competencies. These five competencies were eventually divided into thirty skills, each of them focused on what a leader should KNOW and DO. What misses in comparison with the U.S. Army is the BE. The trend during the last few decades is that the RNLA is primarily focused on the “managerial” side of leadership, consisting of skills and techniques while little emphasis is placed on the mental side of leadership.

Because it is this aspect that makes the difference between officership and civil management, the RNLA still is focused on management more than leadership. This is contrary to the U.S. Army where the emphasis on officership lies on those aspects which makes leadership by officers in the U.S. Army different from civil life: the focus on values and attitudes. This is in line with the conclusion formulated at the end of the first criterion.

OFFICERSHIP: THE REALITY

“Company Commander: They’re not telling me, “Here, you’ve got ten crews-train them.” They’re not allowing me to devise the methods and the ways to get there. They’re giving me the egg and telling how to suck it.”

—Leonard Wong, Stifling Innovation

The fourth criterion will focus on the way all the components mentioned above really work out. Although the quality of officership can hardly be measured using objective criteria, there are certain tools which can be used to develop a reliable overview. Using this method, it is obvious that the U.S. Army faces a problem. The ATLDP report is one of the indicators that the U.S. Army is primarily focused top-down, a trend which is reinforced by the emphasis on loyalty, duty and integrity. Negative effects of this are a lack of bottom-up communication which might deprive the CSA of serious information, a passive attitude by subordinates (“I will do what has been told, there is no room for initiatives”) and finally a negative impact on motivation and retention.

The picture of the RNLA regarding this issue seems somewhat different. Primarily based on their cultural background, Dutch officers have more opportunities to communicate through the chain of command. Culturally, they are more comfortable with a greater extent of freedom

and responsibility than their U.S. colleagues and can act independently. That this attitude works well during peace operations is mentioned before; however, it is not clear whether this attitude is beneficial in wartime.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although there are a lot of similarities between the U.S. Army and the RNLA, significant differences exist between these armies in officership. Since Vietnam, the U.S. Army has abandoned the view that management is the primary element of leadership. Institutionalized in an overall concept of officership, the U.S. Army regards values as the most important characteristic of leadership and embedded this view in the education, training and mentoring of officers. This is in contrast with officership in the RNLA, where management is still seen as the overarching instrument and values are much less important.

This fundamental difference has significant implications for the overall effectiveness of these armies. From my research, the U.S. Army's focus on leadership is more effective in combat operations than the RNLA managerial ethos. However, as shown by my research, there are indications that the RNLA is experiencing a slow and incremental change in the overall conduct of the Army, mainly based on the performance of young officers who have a different mindset concerning operations than their cold war focused older colleagues. It will take time for this culture to be integrated in the RNLA.

Besides this obvious difference, there are strong indications that the U.S. Army may need to change its culture to be able to fully adapt to future demands. The enduring emphasis on technique, in combination with strong "top-down" communication, may not be a favorable situation in a future environment where operations are characterized by an extremely high operational tempo and where tactical decisions can have strategic implications. As discussed, the current "bottom-up" culture existing in the RNLA is more suited for these future challenges.

Based on these general researched conclusions, the RNLA must realize that major changes and improvement of its officership are necessary to set the conditions for a successful future. This can be realized by implementation of the following set of recommendations.

The first category of recommendations has an overarching character and is aimed at the implementation of structural long term changes. Its main purpose is to foster the current mindset of the young officers, which is focused on success in operations and leadership, much more than emphasizing management and individualism. This can be established through drastic

changes in the structure of the officer corps, aiming at a significant decrease of the average age of the officer corps, and by offering improved opportunities for promotion to young officers.

The second category of recommendations mainly focuses on short term effects, aims primarily at the implementation of changes, and affects only elements of the RNLA organization and culture. First, the Army needs to anchor its renewed importance of leadership in its Vision and Mission Statement. These should contain both the Army's focus on operations and the values needed to be successful in these operations. This is the primary foundation for a successful change. Second, the current importance of management must be decreased. Instruments to implement this change are reviewing the current curriculums of major educational programs and limiting the use of civilian management techniques in the existing administration of the Army. Third, the overall focus on values to establish and support the war fighting ethos must be supported by an increased importance of operational assignments and command functions. Within time, this promotion policy and its consequences for the selection of officers will create a chain of command which will support the Army's Vision. Fourth, the Army should constitute a "center for the study of Officership" in accordance with the position of West Point in the U.S. Army. By doing this, the Army ensures that officership is continuously established and integrated in Army policies. Finally, all these changes must be unconditionally supported by the RNLA's chain of command. The commitment of the current leadership is necessary for the successful conduct of the changes suggested.

The categories of recommendations mentioned above are important prerequisites for future success for the RNLA, both in its peacetime commitments and in operations. As an attribution towards this successful future, this research and its results will be presented to the RNLA.

Word count=10057

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